CHINESE CONSERVATISM.

SOME EXAMPLES SHOWING HOW IT HAS OCCASIONALLY BROKEN DOWN.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHINA. Being an Account for the General Reader of an Ancient Empire and People. By Demetrius Charles Boulger. Pp. 436. J. B. Lippincott Company.

Women have at times played a more important part in the politics of China than an outsider would be apt to suppose. In the history of the first dynasty, which achieved really national authority, occurred the name of the Empress Liuchi, mother of the Emperor Hoeiti, who has been compared to Lucretia Borgia because of the relentlessness with which she put out of the way those who troubled her. At the outset of her career as regent she kept Hoeiti on the Dragon Throne by poisoning his most dangerous rival and that rival's mother. She felt the common prejudice against her taking part in public ceremonies bitterly and those who gave utterance to this feeling were marked by her for destruction. An attempt to take vengeance on one of the most powerful princes of the Empire by poisoning him at a banquet was prevented by her son, and Mr. Boulger, doubtless following the annalists, remarks sardonically that it was not surprising that Hoeiti's death followed soon after he had thwarted his mother's purpose. The strange thing was that the old woman still retained her power. Determined to assert her rights, she at first ruled in her own name. But even at the present day that sort of thing would hardly be tolerated in China; so she put on exhibition a supposititious grandson and in his name continued to wield the authority of the Empire. But she had to poison him and his mother to prevent exposure, and again she took the power into her own hands with no shadow of male royalty to give her acts the sanction of custom. By placing her relatives in office she managed to carry on a government in spite of clamorous dissatisfaction and was powerful enough to hold the sceptre till she died. Her whole career seems in many aspects similar to that of Athalia, who at an earlier time had reigned over a nation as prejudiced against female dominance as the Chinese—namely, the Hebrews. She, also, was accused of prolonging her regency by the assassination of the legitimate heirs to the throne of Judah, one after another as they approached their majority. But Athalia died by the sword instead of living out her days as Liuchi did. In both of these cases the over-enthusiastic students of primitivism will perhaps discover a relic of the matriarchate. But what will they say upon finding that a few generations after Liuchi the same course of ambition and crime was followed, not by an empress-mother with a traditional regency in her grasp, but by an emperor's wife, who legally had no political power. It is much simpler, even if it does not sound so deeply philosophical, to say that in both cases the Chinese had to deal, not with a product of social evolution, but with unscrupulous and strong-minded women, such as may arise in any age, late as well as early. It is to be suspected that Kiachi was wedded to a weak prince and that her crimes and her ambition were partly due to her position, which forced her to be brave and cruel simply because her husband was helpless and cowardly. She unquestionably understood human nature, for it was she who discovered Mongkwan, one of the few men of military genius known to China. She found him under extremely unfavorable conditions, for his case was similar in every respect to that of Narses, the Byzantine phenomenon.

But the great women of China were not all mere assassins for the sake of personal power. In the days of provincial insurrection that followed the earlier dynasties, when imperialism became a mere name, there was one Emperor, Vouti, who seems to have done little more than to provoke a group of heroines to acts of valor in behalf of their States. On one occasion Vouti attempted to capture the town of Ginching in Wei. The Governor of the city was absent, but his wife was as good a general as he. "Anticipating by many centuries the conduct of the Countess of Montfort and of the Countess of Derby," she harangued the small garrison and inspired it with her own indomitable spirit. The Emperor was repulsed. He was equally unsuccessful under the walls of another fortress defended by a woman named Liuchi. Mr. Boulger adds: "This may be considered one of the most remarkable periods for the display of female capacity in China, as the great State of Wei was governed by a Queen named Honchi." But these only indicated the possibility of a woman's greatness realized by the Empress Wou, the wife of Kaotsong. Her career was not altogether without crime, for she drowned certain other women, some of whom might have become her rivals, in a vessel of wine. While her husband was no weakling, it was her genius that ruled the Empire, and even after his death she controlled the Government apparently without incurring the hatred that pursued Liuchi. She retained the power until she was eighty years of age. It has been a not unusual practice in all ages for a Chinese Emperor to do what historians have generally marvelled at in the case of Charles V, that is, to abdicate. But the Empress Wou was not of a retiring disposition. She clung to the throne until she was compelled to abdicate. She seems to have been masculine in her turn of mind. As the great Queen Hatasu of Egypt spoke of herself as a man, so the Empress Wou insisted on wearing the robes assigned for an Emperor, and she kept her son practically a prisoner lest he should interfere with her rulership, just as Hatasu is said to have suppressed her young brother, Thothmes. She even ventured to do what no woman had ever done, "to shock Chinese sentiment by offering the annual imperial sacrifice to heaven and by erecting temples to her ancestors," things which were supposed to be impious in a woman. Her wars, as well as her politics and social measures, were successful, and it was only when age had broken her down that friends or enemies dared to mention that unwelcome word "abdication." If one sought her peer in the West and in modern times, he would certainly name Elizabeth of England. In contrast with her there rose a few generations later a woman who was as victorious in peace as the Empress Wou had been in war. She was the mother of the Emperor Jintsong and regent during his minority. Her act in abolishing the taxes on tea and salt won the gratitude of the people. And she restricted the power of "the spiritualists and magicians who had flourished under her husband and acquired many administrative offices under his patronage." In China at all times, as in the Egypt of the Ramesides and the Rome of the Emperors, magic and fortune-telling were found to be one of the perils of the State. Long before the time of Jintsong's mother, an imperial edict against those who saw in everything a portent ran thus: "Peace and the general contentment of the people, the abundance of the harvest, skill and wisdom shown in the administration, these are prognostics of which I hear with pleasure; but extraordinary clouds, rare animals, plants before unknown, monsters and other productions of nature, what good can any of these do men as augurics of the future? I forbid such things to be brought to my notice." But, as the folk-lore of China shows, all efforts to restrain the tendencies of the people, so indifferent in some matters, so superstitious in others, were vain. Another wise woman was the Empress Changchi, who, as Regent, wasted good advice on her incapable son Chitsong of the Ming dynasty. Still another was the mother of Wanleh, and the long reign of that monarch, who witnessed the first coming of Europeans to his country, bore some testimony to her care at the outset. For Wanleh had fallen upon evil times, the Manchus were rising to power beyond the Great Wall, and the wisest sovereign could have done no more than put off the evil day. But the cases of Chitsong's mother and of Wanleh's mother are chiefly of interest because they seem to have been used as precedents for settling the affairs of the Empire between thirty and forty years ago. When Hienfung died in his self-imposed exile at Jehol, in Chinese Tartary, whither he went to nurse his disappointment over the enforced opening of the country, he was surrounded wholly by reactionaries who sympathized with him, and who hated foreigners with murderous bitterness. The Emperor left his son, a child less than six years of age, in charge of a Board of Regency, consisting of eight conservatives, headed by Prince Tsai. To the liberal party in Pekin this board meant death; it was particularly ominous to Prince Kung, who, in the absence of Hienfung, had been the real ruler at Peking, and managed the difficult business of putting into effect treaties that revolutionized wholly the Chinese view of things. If the conservatives could have kept the young Emperor at Jehol they might have carried out their plan, which appears to have been exactly the one that was carried out except that they were the victims, whereas they had hoped to be the victors. In short, every member of the Board of Regents was beheaded. This was brought about mainly by Prince Kung, with whom the act was one of self-preservation, and by two women, one the principal widow of the old Emperor, and the other the mother of the boy who had just come to the throne. Doubtless these women felt that they were the proper guardians of the imperial child and that they had been unjustly deprived of authority. At all events it was by their influence that the youngster's first imperial edict became a dismissal of Hienfung's Regents. That there was a bargain between Prince Kung and the two Empresses seems to have come out very clearly in the formation of a new Regency. The learned men of the Hanlin College easily hit upon the precedents for the proclamation of Tsi An, Hienfung's principal widow, and Tsi Thsi, the mother of the young Emperor, and the two entered upon an administration which outlasted the young Emperor's life.

If Prince Kung supposed that the two Regents were to be as docile always as they were at first, he soon learned his mistake. In an edict issued by them in 1865 he was degraded for having "overrated his own importance." He was reinstated about a month later, but whereas he had formerly hoped "to be supreme and to rule uncontrolled, from this time forth he was content to be their minister and adviser, on terms similar to those that would have been applied to any other official." But there were some other aspects of their rule which showed that the morality of the highest classes had changed but little since the days of the poisoner Liuchi. When the young Emperor Tungche attained the proper age in 1873, he began to reign alone ostensibly, though there were indications that the Regents had by no means relinquished their authority. A year or so later the Emperor died and the two Empresses instantly reasserted themselves. Tungche's widow Ahluta became practically a prisoner. The motive of this was not difficult to guess. "Had Ahluta's child happened to be a son he would have been the legal Emperor, as well as the heir by direct descent, and she herself could not have been excluded from a prominent share in the government. To the Empress Dowagers one child on the throne mattered no more than another; but it was a question of the first importance that Ahluta should be set on one side. In such an atmosphere there is often grievous peril to the lives of inconvenient personages. Ahluta sickened and died. Her child was never born. The charitable gave her credit for having refused food through grief for her husband, Tungche. The sceptical listened to the details of her illness with scorn for the vain efforts to obscure the dark deeds of ambition. In their extreme anxiety to realize their own designs and at the same time not to injure the constitution, the two Empresses had been obliged to resort to a plan that could only have been suggested by desperation. For the first time since the Manchu dynasty occupied the throne, it was necessary to depart from the due line of succession, and to make the election of the sovereign a matter of individual fancy or favor instead of one of inheritance. The choice of the Empresses fell upon Tsai Tien, the son of Prince Chun, or the Seventh Prince. As he was of too tender an age to rule for himself, his nomination served the purposes of the two Empresses and their ally Prince Kung, who thus entered upon a second lease of undisputed power."

Apropos of the release from the tea and salt taxes, one of the few thoroughly popular edicts credited to a woman ruler in China, it may be remarked that in spite of the wonderful conservatism of the nation, projectors of social and fiscal reform, and even persons who would in the West be called socialist agitators, have been familiar objects in the Middle Kingdom at intervals ever since the mythical period. The mythical period was itself the golden age of parental imperialism, when the ruler, not merely in theory, as at present, but in fact, was responsible for the well-being of all his subjects. It was the duty of the Prince to provide for everything. It was one of these shadowy Emperors of the far past who is said to have banished the inventor of rice brandy. But it was more than even a demigod could achieve to banish the brandy after it had once been invented. The stories that relate to the early and questionable period of Chinese nationality are among the strongest proofs that the imperial idea, that of absolute power invested in one man, is the most elementary thought of the people. They have no conception of practical government as consonant with human equality. It is doubtful if they have ever had such an idea since China became an independent political organism; and if Mr. Lacouperie were right in deriving Chinese civilization from the Euphrates Valley with its long-lived and fierce despotisms, it would be certain that even tribal liberty was unknown to the Chinese as such. The nearest approach to it was long periods of feudal rule and of provincial insurrection. Emperors die or abdicate, dynasties fade away to nothingness; but beneath them all is that vast, motionless populace, whose manifest conception of government is that of a deity impersonated on earth. No Republic could create a stronger faith that the right man will appear at the right time than is characteristic of this race which has been imperialist ever since history began; the only difference lies in the notion of the qualities that constitute the right man in the right place. On this point Orientals and Westerners seem likely never to agree. That all government is for the people the Chinese understand thoroughly; that it can be by the people is to them practically, if not theoretically, inconceivable. After the tyranny of Liuchi there came the mild and beneficent rule of Wenti. In the very nature of his reforms one may read the previous discontent of the people, but it never would have occurred to them to see in the relief obtained the outcome of their own collective agitation. Wenti at the very outset lightened the burden of taxes. He appointed honest men as governors and judges. He enforced upon the courts of justice the principle that prince and peasant must be alike subject to law, and he abolished punishment by mutilation. He even went so far as to pension aged men, who had hitherto been a burden to themselves and their families, by giving them an allowance of corn, meat, wine and clothing. Such indulgences from the throne were unquestionably a response to the masses who felt their burden, but hardly knew of what it consisted. The subsequent long period of disunion showed that the real cause of trouble lay in the imperfect subjection of parts to the whole in the body politic. As soon as there came an Emperor strong enough to unite the country, we find him first proclaiming a general amnesty and then forever crippling the provincial governors by taking away from them the power of life and death. It remains to this day a fixed principle of Chinese law that "the life of no citizen can be taken without the express authority and order of the Emperor." The value put upon this personal interference in all matters of life and death was shown later when the Emperor Hientsong delegated his authority in capital cases to a Grand Council of Eunuchs, which Mr. Boulger compares to the "tyrannical and irresponsible Star Chamber" of England. Within five years Hientsong had to yield to threats of civil war. The council was abolished and a large number of its members were executed. Such incidents show how individual and self-centred the vast political organism had become. The ruler is absolute only so long as he feels no tremor of discontent beneath him. Mr. Boulger brings this out later in a single sentence in the narrative of the Manchu conquest. As long as the people of the Empire were united the victorious invaders could advance but slowly. The reigning Emperor might feel that the contest could be prolonged for generations. But there came a day of faction and rebellion, and the ruling dynasty, that of the Mings, was threatened by an insurgent leader, Li Tsecching. "It was a singular situation," says Mr. Boulger, "that the Mings should feel safe against the Manchus who had been gaining victory after victory for forty years, and that they should at once begin to despair when a native rebel such as Li threatened them in their capital." At a later time a general who was advised to flood the country in order to obstruct the movement of the Manchu armies uttered an aphorism which embodies the whole lesson of Chinese history in seven words: "No! First the people, next the dynasty." The Manchus could and did substitute one dynasty for another, but they could not and did not make any important change in the life of China as a nation. And the dynasty which they created sank as its predecessors had done to a point where it has seemed more than once to be on the verge of extinction. "To them the opulent cities of China proved as fatal as Capua to the army of the Carthaginian." It was the presence of the Western foreigner, with his notions of Government so different from that of Orientals, which saved a ruling race practically worn out in China, just as in Southeastern Europe it has preserved the Turk. Left to itself Asia deals with these matters in a way of its own. It wears dynasties out, and takes new ones with the indifference of a man changing his coat. As it has no conception of individuality, so it has no thought of personal loyalty in the Western sense.

But there were some things known to the rest of Asia which the Chinese never would endure. The Mongol Emperors found that the practice of farming the revenue was impossible. Occasionally there have arisen men who talked much in the manner of the National Socialists of the West, but they appear, as a rule, to have found themselves surrounded by a nation of sceptics. At heart the Chinese have some sympathy with that primitive communism which makes the Russian peasants say to the nobles: "We are yours, but the land is ours." Otherwise the proposals of Wanganchi, a Minister in the time of the Sung dynasty, would hardly have been listened to with attention. It was his plan that "the State should take the entire management of commerce, industry and agriculture into its own hands, with the view of succoring the working classes and preventing their being ground to the dust by the rich." The practical Chinese said in effect: "Very fine. We will try it." And Wanganchi was made chief Minister. His first act was to exempt the poor from taxation. He divided the land; he supplied farmers with seeds and implements; he appointed local boards to encourage the agriculturists; but the upshot of the whole business was that the laborer would not work unless he was forced to do so, the area of land under cultivation gradually decreased, and famine stalked about among Wanganchi's untaxed working people. It is a lesson worth remembering. Wanganchi wished to abolish both riches and poverty. He is reported to have said as much. If he had persisted he might have accomplished his purpose, for China was in a fair way to become a desert, where neither poor nor rich could dwell. On the other hand, if the people have always been sceptical as to extreme remedies for poverty, they have at times shown strong opposition to large land ownership. This feeling came to the surface under the same monarch who offended the people with his Council of Eunuchs. He began the practice of making large grants of land which were to be held in perpetuity. Instantly a storm arose which was only allayed by an edict forbidding these territorial concessions. He appears to have violated his own decree on occasion, as other rulers of the Ming dynasty did after him; but the principle was not forgotten; and it is still well understood that the interests of the Emperor and the people are really one on this point—that the ruler cannot afford to make the nobility powerful, and that the people cannot afford to waste on one man lands that would support many families.

Moreover, the whole Chinese system implies, much as that of Egypt did, the equality of citizens in the most vital matters. By the processes of education, the really superior class, that of official life and letters is constantly recruited from among the people themselves. A privilege of this sort forms an insuperable barrier to a return of anything like a general feudal system. On the other hand, when the literary class became unduly powerful, when it endeavored to defeat the law of supply and demand by which it was limited, or when it seemed likely to be overbalanced territorially, both Emperor and people seemed to have known how to deal with it. The act of the ancient Hwangti in massacring 500 men of learning, banishing nearly all the rest, and burning all the books in the Empire, has doubtless lost nothing of its atrocity in the narratives of men who felt called upon to avenge, as far as words could, the wrongs of their predecessors. But Hwangti politically had the best of the case. He had suppressed the old principalities and had united China. While he looked to the future, the literary class had eyes only for the feudal past. He was strong enough to defeat them and he made his victory thorough. He was cruel, but he can hardly be condemned without excuse. Long afterward, in the time of the Ming dynasty, it was discovered that aptitude for learning and the emoluments that followed it might become a territorial perquisite. Before the reign of Suentsong the public examinations had been open indifferently to men from all parts of the Empire. But it was discovered that the scholars from the South had the advantage and that they were in a fair way to fill all the offices under the Government. There were threats of rebellion. To allay the excitement, it was decided to handicap the men of the South by means of district examinations. Henceforth a man might surpass his competitors in his own region, but he was no longer allowed to show by the records that he was the best scholar in all China. But from first to last there was one abuse in the official life, which is practically the learned life, of China, for which no remedy has been found up to the present hour, and that is the universal habit of peculation. The plan of paying adequate salaries has apparently never been tried. It was said by a minister of Keen Lung, the Emperor who received the English Embassy under Lord Macartney, and the same remark is said to be applicable to-day: "It is impossible to remedy the matter, the Emperor himself cannot do it, the evil is too wide spread. He will no doubt send to the scene of these disorders mandarins clothed with all his authority, but they will only commit still greater exactions, and the inferior mandarins, in order to be left undisturbed, will offer them presents. The Emperor will be told that all is well, while everything is really wrong, and while the poor people are being oppressed."

It is a peculiarity of Chinese annals that the history of a dynasty is never given to the world until it has ceased to exist. The result is that every statement of the relations between China and European nations since intercourse began, with all the wars that have attended it, with the discussion of the opium question, with all the controversies of diplomacy, must for the present and perhaps for ages to come be one-sided. It may be that China will follow the example of her Western acquaintances and indulge in the prompt publication of official business. She has doubtless surprised herself by other acts in the last century or so that were as much opposed to her traditions. Meanwhile Mr. Boulger's narrative is confessedly lacking on the Chinese side of nearly all the questions that were in dispute with England. We may be certain that England's case does not suffer in his hands. He speaks of the Embassy of Lord Macartney in 1792-93 with enthusiasm. But he is judging rather by what followed it than by the feelings of its members, of whom it was remarked at the time that they "entered China like paupers, remained in it like prisoners, and quitted it like vagrants." When the prejudices of the Chinese became better understood it was seen that they had acted up to the maxims of their diplomacy, the first principle of which was that the superiority of the Emperor to all other potentates and of China to all other powers must always be insisted on both by word and sign. It may be supposed that this change in European knowledge leads Mr. Boulger to replace the rather emphatic words just quoted with the mild remark that the Embassy met "an honorable and exceedingly gratifying reception."

The work is arranged in accordance with the order of the Chinese dynasties. Indeed, Mr. Boulger explains that the history of China pertains wholly to Government. He contemptuously declares any history of the Chinese people impossible. "The history of the Empire," says he, "has always been the fortunes of the dynasty, which has depended, in the first place, on the passive content of the subjects, and in the second on the success or failure of its external and internal wars. . . . It might be more instructive to trace the growth of thought among the masses, or to indicate the progress of civil and political freedom; yet not only do the materials not exist for such a task, but those we possess tend to show that there has been no growth to describe, no progress to be indicated." The historical chapters are supplemented with an article on "How China is Governed," and with appendices containing a chronological list of Emperors and the treaties of China with England.

LITERARY NOTES.

Sheridan's great-grandson has placed a mass of valuable unpublished Sheridan papers at the disposal of Mr. Fraser Rae, and these will be used to expand Rae's "Life of Sheridan," which has long been out of print. Among these papers are many interesting letters which passed between Sheridan and his first and second wives, a correspondence with the Prince Regent, and a copy of "The School for Scandal" corrected by the author.

That the great characters in fiction are not those most remarkable for their goodness is the contention of "The Spectator." "As a rule," it says, "the greater masculine characters in fiction, like the great characters in history, are deeply scored with lines of tempestuous force and noble or ignoble passion. And literature, though in the hands of the highest genius it had occasionally managed to paint an ideal heroine who impresses us as thoroughly real, has hardly ever managed to paint an ideal hero who is both thoroughly real and thoroughly masculine. Of all the greater characters it may be said:

"Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give.

But the long lines of shadow are lines which score not only suffering but sin. And wherever that is absent, we almost always find in their place some signal want of power, some signal deficiency in sagacity, resoluteness, and distinctness of purpose. The few exceptions may almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. The 'great' characters in fiction are generally the most pathetically helpless, or else the most passionate and imperious of human characters."

Robert Buchanan has again worked himself into a temper over his fellow-writers and their opinions. Having delivered the other day a fiery sermon on the foolishness and wickedness of an author's desire to make money, he has now relieved his mind on the demoralizing pursuit of fame. "More than one of the great writers," he says, "paid the spiritual penalty of inordinate literary success. Tennyson, we know, suffered tortures from the slightest breath of adverse criticism. George Eliot, kept by G. H. Lewes in a moral hothouse, screened from every bleak wind that blows, said to me on one occasion, with an air of beatified superiority, I think Mr. Dickens has done a great deal of good." The good, the only Dickens endured agonies of mortified vanity when a book of his failed to reach the high-water mark of sale and profit. Even those who have to wait long and wearily for appreciation are seldom content to estimate the world's opinion at its exact worth. Browning, according to Leigh Hunt, hungered eagerly for the praise of even 'his washerwoman.'"

Mrs. Burton Harrison has been editing a volume of "Short Stories" for the Harpers' "Distaff Series."

M. Anatole France has said that he never knew a writer of talent spoiled by the practice of journalism, whereas he has known many improved by it. M. Daudet believes the very reverse. "I deplore," he says, "the necessity of a novelist having to make journalism his start in life; for, as all newspaper writing has to be done against time, his style must certainly deteriorate and his literature becomes journalese."

M. Daudet holds the opinion that the man who has it in him to write will do so, however great his difficulties. He says to those who come to consult him: "However much occupied you are with your present way of earning a livelihood, if you have it in you to write anything you will surely find time to do it."

A new edition in three volumes of the late Lord Lytton's verses is on the press. The first volume will contain "The Wanderer," which was brought out in 1858, when "Owen Meredith" was an unpaid attache.

Mr. I. N. Ford's "Tropical America," published by the Scribners, has been received with marked fairness and favor in England, notwithstanding its strong American tone. "The London Chronicle" and other English journals contain long and critical reviews of it, and accord it a high place in the literature of modern travel. "The Spectator," which devotes nearly three columns to an exhaustive examination of the book, confirms the author's estimate of Spanish-American civilization, but is disposed to qualify his strictures upon British rule in the West Indies, although these are less severe than Mr. Froude's. Its general judgment of the book is highly favorable as "a valuable contribution to contemporary history by a man of the world who sees what passes around him and notes it down in direct and forcible language."

"The Present State of Chinese Society" is the title of a forthcoming volume by Professor R. K. Douglas, of the British Museum. It deals with the political and social life of the Chinese.

Mr. Howells's "Bride Roses"—the little dramatic sketch in "Harper" which he justly calls a "scene"—is, with its shadow of tragedy, a truly poetic bit of work. It is a little unreal, perhaps, but it is quite possible; and it is put together with delicate accuracy of effect.

Giovanni Verga's "Cavalleria Rusticana"—the story on which both the opera and play of that name were founded—has been translated into English by Alma Strettell, and will soon be brought out in a volume of the "Pseudonym Library."

Sir Richard Burton's rare version of Giovanni Battista Basile's "Pentamerone," a seventeenth century collection of fifty tales, is to be republished in London. It will be issued in two expensive editions, in two volumes and in one.

The forthcoming volume of "Early English Printing"—one of the series of "Books about Books"—will contain fac-similes illustrating every type used at an English press before 1500. Only 300 copies will be printed.

A DUTCH-ENGLISH WRITER.

From The London Star.

The special function of the Authors' Club at ranged in celebration of the election of Mr Maarten Maartens to honorary membership was a great success. Most of those who attended had a notion that Mr. Maartens was a typical Dutchman; for it was known that in his native land he lived the life of a plain country gentleman, and there seemed to be an impression that the editions of his novels published in England were translations. The fact is, however, not only that Mr. Maartens has a perfect mastery of the English language, but also that both "God's Fool" and the "Sin of Joost Aveling" were written in English.

Mr. Maartens is every inch of him a Dutchman, but he learned English in order to be able to write his novels in our tongue, and, as he showed last night, he can make an excellent after-dinner speech in English. His accent is provincial rather than foreign.

Alice—Oh, dear, it is so awfully hot. I know I look just like a boiled lobster, don't I?

Mabel—Yes.

Alice—You horrid mean, old thing!—(Minneapolis Journal.

FOLK-MUSIC IN CHICAGO.

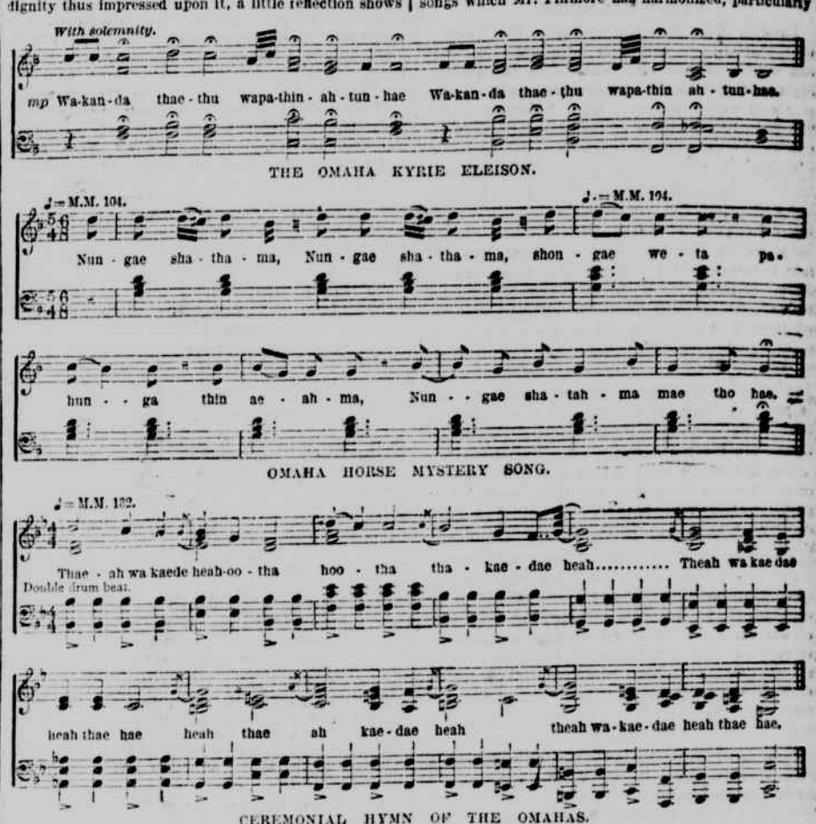
I.

SONGS OF THE OMAHA INDIANS.

WHAT MISS FLETCHER AND MR. FILLMORE ARE DOING—A HARMONIC BASIS FOR FOLK-MUSIC.

Every one who has been to the World's Fair at Chicago is likely in his own way to tell of the manifold uses to which that marvellous institution can be put. Of course, to the majority of visitors its mission is accomplished after it has filled the annual holiday with entertainment and diversion. Hence it is that the Midway Plaisance is the most popular feature of the Fair. Now, strictly speaking, the Midway Plaisance occupies the same relationship to the Exhibition that the old-time sideshow did to the menagerie which it accompanied. Here fraud and humbug are rife, and "fakirs" of all kinds ply their vocation with so much impudence that the spectacle at last becomes almost amiable.

This kaleidoscopic pleasure ground is classified under the head of Ethnology, however, and even if one be inclined to smile at the stamp of scientific dignity thus impressed upon it, a little reflection shows that it all depends on the visitor whether or not its significance shall be summed up in the antics of the "fakirs." It is easy to make a field for scientific study even out of the Midway Plaisance. I have chosen but a single subject out of the many which are suggested to every thinking man almost at every step, and if I extend my observations beyond the geographical territory mentioned it will only be because it becomes necessary to do so in order fully to appreciate the significance of the subject. My aim is to present some thoughts on folk-music, which were prompted by things seen and heard during a recent visit to the Columbian Fair. The study was a hurried one, and its scope could easily have been extended tenfold had time and opportunity allowed; yet it may suffice to suggest a starting point to some investigator, as well as to entertain the more careless reader. The places where the studies were made are the Midway Plaisance, the Indian villages in the southeastern corner of Jackson Park, under the shadow of the building devoted to Ethnology and Anthropology, and in one of the halls of the Art Institute, where during the week of July 2–8 a musical congress was held. It is with some of the manifestations of the session of this congress held on July 5 that this paper is specially concerned. At this session Miss Alice C. Fletcher, of the Peabody Museum, Harvard College, read a paper on "Music as Found in Certain North American Indian Tribes." The essay was illustrated by the singing of a number of songs noted down by Miss Fletcher while living among the Omaha Indians and studying their institutions.



The songs were sung by Mr. Francis la Flesche, an Omaha Indian of fine education, who is a trusted clerk of the Indian Bureau of the Government at Washington and a law student; their relation to the laws of music was afterward discussed by Mr. John C. Fillmore, of Milwaukee, one of the most distinguished of American theorists, who has collaborated with Miss Fletcher in the preservation of the songs of the Omahas for scientific study. Mr. Fillmore has verified Miss Fletcher's transcription by a visit to the Omahas, and has harmonized the melodies and prepared them for publication. An exhaustive study of them in connection with the religious ceremonies of the Indians will appear shortly in the "Harvard Monograph." From what Miss Fletcher and Mr. Fillmore disclosed in their essays it is safe to say that this publication will be among the most valuable contributions ever made to this branch of ethnological study.

When the "Monograph" appears it will be time enough to discuss some of the questions raised by the music of the Omaha Indians. There were two points, however, in the testimony given by Miss Fletcher and Mr. Fillmore which ought to be remembered when the accompanying songs (for which I am indebted to the kindness of my friends) are performed. One of the most troublesome of the problems which confront the collector of the music of savage and semi-civilized people is to determine whether or not the frequent deviations from the intervals of pitch common to European music noticeable in the music under investigation are due to a recognition of smaller intervals than the semi-tone or to personal equation on the part of the singer. Since we know that some Oriental systems, notably the Arabic, make use of these smaller intervals, it has become common for collectors to set down all deviations from what we call true pitch as one of the recognitions of scales constituted differently than ours. Such a theory is fascinating in spite of the difficulty in which it involves the investigator, but it is not so easily proven as it would seem. My own experience among the Iroquois Indians taught me that the reasons for the deviations are sometimes purely individual. The leading tone is forced upward when sung before the note which brings the sense of closure and rest, and flattened when used in a descending phrase. This is a phenomenon which our own singing teachers have always observed. Then again, singing among savage or semi-civilized peoples is a universal practice and a simple, natural expression. It is not the result of training.


OMAHA PIPE DANCE.

Savage throats are not trained to artistic emission of tones, and savage ears are not refined to the detection of minute deviations from pitch. Such detection, indeed, would presuppose a peculiarly nice operation of analytical comparison, for the music, having no harmony, a discordant tone is discoverable only by melodic reflection, so to speak. To do this would be a feat even for some schooled musicians. It is no more difficult to the Indian than the majority of white laymen in music. Miss Fletcher thinks that the scale relationship in the consciousness of the Indian is the same as that in ours, and that the deviations noticeable in their performances are due to a tremulousness of voice which is affected for the sake of expression. This is interesting, at least, as a hypothesis, particularly in view of the deductions to which it has led in the work of Mr. Fillmore. This gentleman was induced by a study of the melodies provided by Miss Fletcher to believe that the process of melody-making on the part of primitive peoples is in reality an analysis of harmony. A chord is latent in the singer's consciousness, and this he separates into its constituent intervals when he constructs a melodic phrase, or the succession of tones out of which he builds his melody. The existence of this latent harmonic sense, Mr. Fillmore thinks, is indicated not only in the modulations through which some of the melodies pass, but also in the fact that when he played the melodies for the Indians on the pianoforte or organ they were not satisfied with the effect until he supplied the harmony which the succession of intervals suggested to his mind and musical sense. Strong support for this proposition is certainly found in some of the Omaha songs which Mr. Fillmore has harmonized, particularly the ceremonial hymn printed herewith, which begins obviously enough in the key of B-flat major and ends just as unmistakably in C major, after hurried sidewise excursions into several other keys.

As to the songs printed herewith. They are all religious. Two may be described as examples of individual devotion; the third is ceremonial, or liturgic. What I have called the Omaha "Kyrie Eleison," Miss Fletcher calls simply the Omaha prayer. It is the one song which is common property. All Omaha children learn it, and it is the youth's form of supplication until, through the medium of a vision, he acquires a personal formula. Its meaning is simple and comprehensive: "Wakanda" ("the Power that makes," says Miss Fletcher, "the Great Mysterious Power," says J. Owen Dorsey), "I am poor; have pity on me!" That is all. This prayer the Omaha child is taught when clay is put on his head and a little bow and arrows (which are not to be used, however) are given to him by his father. Later, when he is to enter upon man's estate, he is sent out alone to some solitary spot that, through fasting and prayer, his "mind may become white." Day after day he lives thus alone, eating nothing, drinking nothing, repeating the prayer, "Wakanda, thae-thu wa-pa-thin an-tun-hae!" At last he is released and rewarded by a vision, which is afterward incorporated in a song which becomes his personal prayer and is thereafter used whenever guidance is sought before an enterprise is undertaken. Such a prayer is the accompanying "Horse Mystery Song," the meaning of which Mr. La Flesche gave me as follows: "Nun-gae" (horses run), "sha-ta-ma" (there they go), "shon-gae" (horse), "we-ta" (mine), "pa-hun-ga" (first), "thin" (the) "ae-ah-ma" (they say). That is to say, the praying warrior sees a vision of a horse-race with his own animal ahead. Thereafter he uses this formula whenever praying for help or success, and these gifts are to be won through his horse.

Mr. Fillmore has suggested that the singular effect of the beginning in 5–4 time is an exemplification of the Indian's sense for descriptive music. The horses do not get into their regular stride until the regular 6–8 time is reached. The harmonies, as printed, are all Mr. Fillmore's. It should be understood that all Indian songs are sung in unison, with no accompaniment save drum-beats. The rhythm of the drum-beats Mr. Fillmore has indicated in the notes for the left hand.

The third hymn, whose interesting harmonic character has been indicated, is one of the songs sung in connection with the ceremonies, which are performed with the peace pipes of the Omahas—symbols of great significance and articles of real beauty. Strictly speaking, they are not pipes at all, but pipe-stems, richly decorated with eagle feathers, and streamers, terminating in a carved bird's head instead of a bowl. The religious significance of these symbols and the nature of the ceremonies performed with them were set forth by Miss Fletcher in an essay entitled "Politics and Pipe-Dancing," printed in "The Century Magazine" last January. The presentation of gifts has much to do with these so-called "wa-wan" ceremonies. Mr. La Flesche, in interpreting the song, said that the words of some of the ceremonial songs are archaic and their literal meaning is lost. In the present case the sentiment of the song might thus be summed up: "This is what I mean; this is what I give you." The music accompanies the swaying of the pipes by the leaders in the ceremonies, and has the support of gourd rattles as well as drums. The appoggiatura which enters in the second measure and is repeated in the third, fifth, seventh, eighth and ninth is in effect a syncopation, and is intoned about a quarter of a tone above the pitch as represented.

H. E. K.

A SESTINA OF PETRARCH'S.

Desperate of finding pity in Laura, he will none the less love her to the end of life.

I saw a youthful lady 'neath a laurel,
Whiter she was and prouder than drift snow
That, shadow-sheltered, freezes through the years;
And of her speech and sweet brave look and locks
Flowing and strong, such jovance took mine eyes
That there she stands, stand I on rock or plain.

Not shall my torment cease and all be plain
Till I may find no verdure on the laurel,
And ere storms quit my heart or tears mine eyes
There shall be fire frost-bitten, and burning snow;
She hath not hairs so many in her locks
As, ere my bliss, there must be bitter years.

Nathless if, sped the time and told her years,
Alone she face pale Death without complain,
Then, oh how bleached soe'er my own poor locks,
I journey forth to find my ghostly Laurel,
Whether thro' blistering sand or shrouds of snow,
So in the end of time she slake mine eyes.

Never to earth bent down such lovely eyes
Since earth was ours, nor in the ancient years;
Glancing on mine—as strikes the sun on snow—
A dolorous stream of tears furrows the plain.
And, Love-led, waters that so scornful Laurel
Branched with crystal, crown'd with golden locks.

Great dread have I to quit for stranger locks
Or shun for soother welcome from friendlier eyes
My monument of pain, graved in green laurel.
Worshipped yet unregardful seven slow years—
Seven years of sighing dragged across the plain
Of life, from August drouth to winter snow.

A heart on fire, a front laced o'er with snow,
Alone with my dead thoughts and shattered locks,
Mourning forever I will make my plain—
So peradventure in her shining eyes
Shall well a fount of pity—hers's, whom years
And aeons could not match—my shapely Laurel!

Laurel of mine! Since not the sun on snow
Could brave thy goldy locks, so by thine eyes
Quelled shall my years drag to Death's silent plain.

THE DEW'S GIFT.

The spider works with wit and will,
She frames her wheel and she is sped;
But 'tis the dew's gift, not her skill,
That hangs with diamonds every thread.
With pains and patience we no less
Shape not our lives, but yet allow
That all our brightest happiness
Is sent from Heaven, we know not how.

H. J.

INSCRIPTION FOR COLERIDGE'S COTTAGE.

Traveller, beneath this roof in bygone days
Dwelt Coleridge. Here he sang his witching lays
Of that strange Mariner, and what befell
In mystic hour the Lady Christabel!
And here one day, when summer breezes blew,
Came Lamb, the frolic and the wise, who drew
Fresh mirth from secret springs of inward glee;
Here Wordsworth came, and wild-eyed Dorothy.
Now all is silent; but the taper's light,
Which from these windows shone so late at night,
Has streamed afar. To these great souls was given
A double portion of the Light from Heaven!

—(E. H. Coleridge.